

SBC ANNUAL MEETING

Messengers elect new president

BALTIMORE (BP) — Messengers to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) elected Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd as president and heard repeated calls for prayer and revival, highlighted by outgoing President Fred Luter's presidential sermon.

Messengers also gave the first of two required approvals to an amendment of the SBC constitution, requested information about a Muslim student who was admitted to Southwestern Seminary, and heard SBC Executive Committee President Frank S. Page call for a "Great Commission Advance" in SBC missions.

The June 10-11 convention's 5,294 messengers marked an increase from 5,103 in Houston last year. Virginia had more messengers than any other state at the Baltimore convention with 497. Maryland was second with 429.

Floyd elected

Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, was elected on the first ballot with 51.6% of the vote. Maryland pastor Dennis Manpoong Kim received 40.7% of the vote while Kentucky pastor Jared Moore received 5.9%.

"I want to see revival come to the church of Jesus Christ, so that America would be awakened with a powerful God consciousness where great numbers come to faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior," Floyd said at a news conference following his election.

Luter farewell

Preaching from Psalm 80:18-19, the passage for this year's Restoration and Revival through Prayer theme, Luter said in his message as outgoing president that Southern Baptists must repent of their failure to share the Gospel with lost men and women.

"As your president for the past two years, my heart's desire has been that God would make us one and that God would send revival and renewal through the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention," said Luter, the SBC's first African American president who



(ABOVE) IMB EXHIBIT — The International Mission Board (IMB) exhibit at the Baltimore Convention Center was ready last week to receive messengers and visitors to the 2014 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention and tell the story of Southern Baptist mission efforts around the world. (BP photo)



(AT LEFT) SBC OFFICERS — Newly elected 2014 officers of the Southern Baptist Convention are: (left to right) Jim Wells, registration secretary; John L. Yeats, recording secretary; Ronnie Floyd, president; Clint Pressley, first vice president; and Hance Dilbeck, second vice president. (BP photo)

served two terms and was not eligible for reelection.

"Brothers and sisters, the only way that will happen in this nation, the only way that will happen in this convention, the only way that will happen in our churches is if the people of God cry out to God in prayer, if there is genuine repentance, if there is genuine remorse, and if we call on the name which is above every name," Luter said.

Article III

The proposed amendment to Article III of the SBC Constitution would grant two messengers to the annual meeting for each cooperating church that contributed to convention causes during the preceding fiscal year. A church would qualify for additional messengers through one of two avenues:

■ A church would receive one additional messenger for each full percent of its undesignated receipts given through the Cooperative Program, as a designated gift through the Executive Committee for convention causes or to any SBC entity.

■ A church would receive one additional messenger for each \$6,000 given during the preceding fiscal year through CP, as a designated gift to the EC for convention causes or to any SBC entity.

The \$6,000 figure was selected by adjusting the present figure of \$250, which was adopted in 1888, for inflation and other factors.

To become final, the amendment must be approved again at next year's annual meeting in Columbus, Ohio.

Great Commission Advance

Page told messengers about a strategy for world evangelism

and discipleship called Great Commission Advance. A key component of the strategy is the Cooperative Program (CP), Page said.

He reported that the Executive Committee will soon reduce its CP allocation for the third time during his tenure as president in order to send more money to Southern Baptist ministries at home and abroad.

"I'll drop the Cooperative Program if you can show me something else that long-term is effective and engages every church concurrently and consistently in an Acts 1:8 strategy," Page said. "Show it to me, and I'll support it... but I haven't found it yet."

Page said the average CP gift among Southern Baptist churches rose for the first time in two decades to 5.5%.

Resolutions

The convention adopted

nine resolutions on topics ranging from transgender identity to payday lending, church revitalization, global hunger relief, the 50th anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and casinos and lotteries.

The resolution on transgender identity affirmed "God's good design that gender identity is determined by biological sex and not by one's self-perception." The resolution invited transgender persons "to trust in Christ and to experience renewal in the Gospel" and opposed all efforts to "validate transgender identity as morally praiseworthy."

The resolutions will be published in The Baptist Record issue of June 26.

ERLC awards

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the SBC presented awards to the Green family, which owns Hobby Lobby, and Saeed Abedini, an American pastor who is imprisoned in Iran for his Christian faith.

The Greens received the John Leland Religious Liberty Award for their refusal to abide by the federal government's abortion/contraception mandate, which requires

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Coming our way

Political commentators and religion observers have said it for years: the Obama administration will find a way to impose its will on churches all across the country when it comes to advancing the homosexual political agenda. It is as if the President and his advisors are obsessed with churches and religious entities that refuse to cower before them, whether it is over this issue, the unfettered destruction of the unborn, the Obamacare abortion/contraceptive mandates, or a host of other matters crucial to the future moral direction of the country.

A June 16 article by Neil Munro at dailycaller.com details the fanatical determination of the Obama administration to have their way, step by step. Quoting White House officials, Munro reports that Obama will soon order federal government agencies to deny contracts to companies and non-profit organizations that treat homosexuality differently than heterosexuality.

As Munro reports, "Progressives applauded the announcement — which comes one day before a huge fundraiser with gay donors — and demanded that Obama leaves no exceptions, even for religious non-profits that use federal dollars to aid the poor and disadvantaged."

"It is now vitally important for all of us to insist that this executive order, when eventually signed by the president, does not include religious exemptions that would permit taxpayer dollars to be spent on discrimination," said a statement from Heather Cronk, the co-director of the GetEQUAL advocacy group in Berkeley, Ca. "LGBT Americans need these protections immediately, and without the gaping holes that exemptions would create," Cronk insisted.

As most but not all of us are aware, the modern homosexual rights movement has morphed into a campaign that also includes rights for females attracted to other females (lesbian), people who are attracted to both sexes (bisexual), and people who are of one gender but believe they psychically belong to the other gender (transgender). Thus the

acronym LGBT, for Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender.

Putting aside for another day the legitimate argument over whether religious institutions should be taking money from the federal government at all, it appears that the Obama administration and homosexual rights movement are willing to allow homeless families with children to go without crucial assistance in the name of politics.

When the President said on Jan. 14 that he would use his pen and his phone to bypass Congress, he meant it — even if children won't be able to receive a much-needed meal. Opposition in Congress to similar legislation has led Obama to unilaterally mandate the action through the presidential executive order process.

"This is yet another example of what little regard President Obama has for the American people and our form of government," Mario Diaz, legal counsel at the conservative Concerned Women for America organization in Washington, D.C., told Munro.

Churches and religious institutions that don't accept federal dollars should disabuse themselves of the notion that they are safe from such political heavy-handedness. This is merely one small step for now. There will undoubtedly be more steps in the future to bring about compliance with the administration's goals.

Homosexual advocacy groups such as GetEQUAL, which has a presence in this state and has criticized the Mississippi College School of Law in the past, know they must overcome the resolute resistance to their agenda among churches and religious institutions. Once that group is broken under the power of government and falls into line, it's clear sailing for them.

Don't think it can happen in Mississippi? A number of municipal governing bodies, including Jackson, Oxford, Starkville, Hattiesburg, Greenville, Bay St. Louis, and Magnolia have already pledged allegiance to the LGBT cause.

The time is now to get prayed up and prepared for the onslaught. Will you be ready?

Why the SBC?

The question of whether denominations are really necessary often arises in my Baptist History and Heritage classes at Southwestern Seminary. Averse to what they perceive as staid institutionalism or red-tape bureaucracy, students tend to categorize denominations as a generational matter and thus look for something new for the present.

These motives are not entirely uninformed or born from ignorance, as there are plenty of generational traditions that every new generation discards. We've done it and so did our parents and grandparents. However, in this case it is always a delight to inform students of the primary reason Baptists in this country ever saw the need to form a national denomination.

They were motivated by something they called their "one sacred effort" — churches of all sizes cooperating together for the purpose of global missions and, I quickly argue, that is the foremost reason why we should have, support, build, and be proud of a national denomination today.

This question especially comes to mind at this time of year when the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention gather for their annual meeting, which occurred last week in Baltimore.

It is also relevant because we are at the 200th anniversary of the start of the first Baptist denomination in America, the Triennial Convention. Formed in May 1814, the Triennial Convention would serve as the forerunner to the Southern Baptist Convention that would originate in 1845, sadly over a disagreement among Baptists in the North and South over the tragic and evil practice of slavery.

The Baptists of 1814 officially called their denomination, "The General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America, for Foreign Missions," clearly not yet arriving at the penchant future denominations have for simple and repeatable acronyms. In fact, as this early convention set out to meet once every three years, the more natural Triennial Convention rose as the agreed nomenclature instead of GMCBDUSAEM.

Why did Baptists form a national denomination 200 years ago? Here are the words from the Triennial Convention's first constitution:



Guest opinion

with Jason G. Duesing

We the delegates from Missionary Societies, and other religious Bodies of the Baptist denomination, in various parts of the United States, met in Convention, in the City of Philadelphia, for the purpose of carrying into effect the benevolent Intentions of our Constituents, by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining, and directing the Energies of the whole Denomination in one sacred effort, for sending the glad tidings of Salvation to the Heathen, and to nations destitute of pure Gospel-light.

This shared idea of marshaling the energies of churches to take the Gospel of Christ to "nations destitute of pure Gospel-light" was echoed through the first meetings of the denomination on May 18-25, 1814. The first president, well-known and admired Baptist statesman Richard Furman, underscored in his address that the convention "has assembled in Philadelphia ... to devise a plan, and enter into measures, for combining the efforts of our whole denomination, in behalf of the millions upon whom the light of evangelic truth has never shone."

Taking the light of the Gospel to nations in darkness served as the primary motive for early American Baptists to organize and gather on a national level. As Southern Baptists adjourn our latest annual meeting in Baltimore, may the bicentennial anniversary of the beginnings of our forebears remind us that the Great Commission remains a good and primary reason around which churches should gather to do more together for the glory of God than we could ever do apart.

Duesing is vice president for strategic initiatives and assistant professor of historical theology at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth.

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BAPTISTS

VOLUME 138 • NUMBER 25 • ISSN-0005-6778
Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$10.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.



PRAYER FOR MISSIONARIES — Roger Wall (left) embraces Dante and Schenita Randolph during a time of prayer for the 95 International Mission Board and North American Mission Board workers commissioned during a Woman's Missionary Union Celebration June 8 at the Baltimore Convention Center prior to the beginning of the 2014 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. Wall, pastor of Providence Church in Pageland, S.C., served in Durham, N.C., where the Randolphs serve as missionaries at Grace Park Church. (BP photo)

Rare joint commissioning service held in Baltimore

BALTIMORE (BP) — The International Mission Board (IMB) and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) commissioned approximately 100 workers during a rare joint commissioning service sponsored by the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) on June 8 at the Baltimore Convention Center, prior to the start of the 2014 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

In an emotional service marked by prayer and praise, many were commissioned to serve as church planters, evangelism catalysts, collegiate ministers, refugee workers, chaplains, and ministers to people groups in difficult areas of the world.

A capacity crowd listened to numerous testimonies of how God called individuals to Himself and into His service.

Charles, 71, and Jan C., 69, after years of serving in various countries, now will work with South Asian refugees. "Why do we go? Why not retire and just take it easy?" Charles asked.

"Because God's called us, and we cannot say, 'No,'" Jan answered.

Charles agreed: "Missions is for life. Don't let your age keep you from doing what God wants you to do!"

Through an interpreter, Gilmer and Ethel Mauricio, who have pastored several churches across South America, shared how they came to serve as church planters

in Iowa. Because they could not find a Spanish language church, the couple visited Immanuel Church, a congregation that had prayed for four years for God to send a Hispanic planter.

Five days later, the Mauricios started a Spanish language church there with 24 people. The church now has around 60 worshipers.

Jose Nater, along with his wife Mayra, shared how he serves as a bivocational pastor of three simultaneous church plants on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Kirk and Tamra Overstreet, church planting catalysts in California, have seen thousands come to know Christ. Kirk said he grew up as a pastor's kid and had made a lot of bad choices, but 18 years ago, he repented and put his trust in Jesus. The couple has planted churches for the past 14 years.

Some missionaries said they heard God's call to mission service while serving on short-term mission trips. Five of them had been involved in Girls in Action when they were younger.

IMB President Tom Elliff challenged the missionaries to spread the Gospel with urgency.

He shared his experience with a young man who once asked him about God. Feeling exhausted at the time, Elliff agreed to meet him at a later date. Sadly, the man committed suicide before Elliff had the opportunity to share the Gospel.

"That event radically changed

my life," Elliff said. He encouraged the missionaries to follow the Apostle Paul's admonition in Colossians 4:17, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

Pointing to Acts 18, NAMB President Kevin Ezell encouraged the missionaries and their families not to be afraid of the mission assignments. "It's a lot easier to talk about missions to your kids at VBS than it is at a commissioning service," he acknowledged, noting God's presence, protection and perspective would provide for each of them.

Frank S. Page, president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee, and Debby Akerman, WMU president, offered prayers for the missionaries. Native Praise, a musical group composed of Native Americans from Oklahoma, shared praise music in English, and three languages which represent the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma. Wanda Lee, WMU's executive director/treasurer, led participants to consider committing to pray, give or go in support of missions.

The last joint commissioning service between IMB and NAMB is believed to have been conducted 25 years ago, said Lee, who organized the 2014 event as a prelude to this year's WMU annual meeting and missions celebration.

The event marks the culmination of a yearlong celebration of WMU's 125th anniversary.

WMU celebrates offering record, 125th anniversary

BALTIMORE (BP) — Celebrating historic milestones and the highest offering ever for international missions was the focus of the national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) report to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Wanda Lee, WMU's executive director/treasurer, and Debby Akerman, national president, said WMU wrapped up a year-long celebration of the Southern Baptist auxiliary's 125th anniversary at this year's missions celebration June 8-9, complete with historic tours in the area.

Days prior to the gathering, 100 people toured sites in Virginia significant to Lottie Moon and her legacy as a pioneer missionary to China, and on June 9 some 600 people toured sites around Baltimore where Annie Armstrong lived and worked as the first leader for WMU, which was founded in 1888.

On June 8, WMU in conjunction with the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board sponsored the first joint commissioning service at a national event in 25 years, encompassing more than 100 new missionaries.

"It is a privilege to work with the two mission boards to inspire and challenge churches to share the Gospel with a waiting world," Lee said. "Will you join us? The world is truly in desperate need of the Gospel and we have it in our hands."

WMU also celebrated and thanked Southern Baptists for the largest amount ever given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, more than \$154 million in 2013.



WMU REPORT — Wanda Lee (right), executive director and treasurer of the national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), gives a report during the closing session of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting on June 11 at the Baltimore Convention Center. Looking on is WMU president Debby Akerman. (BP photo)

"When the women organized as WMU in 1888 ... I know they never dreamed an offering of this size would be the result many years later and yet, because they were faithful in their day, we have the opportunity to continue their legacy today in our giving."

Debby Akerman

WMU president

"When the women organized as WMU in 1888 and accepted the challenge of raising funds for a church in Cuba and for women to help Lottie Moon in China, I know they never dreamed an offering of this size would be the result many years later and yet, because they were faithful in their day, we have the opportunity to continue their legacy today in our giving," Akerman said.

Lee reported that during the WMU missions celebration, Akerman of Myrtle Beach, S.C., was re-elected to a fifth and final term as president of national WMU, and Linda Cooper of Bowling Green, Ky., was elected as recording secretary.

Cooper follows Rosalie Hunt of Guntersville, Ala., a retired international missionary who served as recording secretary the past five years.

Years ago in a newspaper snip-it, Ripley's Believe It or Not presented a fact that said that in Mississippi there are three communities that touch each other - Increase, Energy and Whynot. It is a fact that all three communities at that time ran together or at least bumped up against each other. Later the country community of Increase renamed itself as Causeyville. So now just outside of Meridian there is Whynot, Causeyville and Energy. Why would the little village community rename itself Causeyville when for years they had been stuck with the name Increase? What would possess a community of people to get together and name themselves? I wondered why the community folks got together one time and proposed, discussed, and finally did change their name from Increase to Causeyville.

In the small little downtown area of Causeyville there is an old country store and gas store. Now that the town has been renamed Causeyville from Increase there is a marker pointing to the fact that there is a historic spot there in Causeyville. It is the old Causeyville, or as it used to be Increase, grocery store. The folks in the area still know what they used to say about the old store where men gathered to spit and whittle. The word was there were two things that you would never hear around that



Increase, Energy and Whynot

old store. One was the truth and two was meat frying.

Now the first missing element - the truth - is a missing element in a lot of places across the countryside. Instead of telling the truth it seems that today it is more important to dance, dodge, bob and weave. It really does not matter who you are, where you serve or what the issue may be. Regardless of whether it is mechanics or machine operators, politicians or physicians, teachers, preachers or just plain old creatures, we have all learned that what is important is to farce words, tell partial truths and deny the rest.

The other missing element from the old store was meat frying. It is my understanding that this is sort of a play on words describing folks that are a tad lazy and won't get up, go out and either earn the bacon or bring in the game. They just sit around doing nothing and no meat is cooking. The absence of both of these things is a tragedy. They certainly can be seen far beyond just a little community grocery store and their absence are a tragedy in our day. I am not denying that it is not bad, for it is. But I am also aware that there may have been times that it was worse than now. I am certainly aware

that there have been times when it was better than now.

For me personally, it seemed to be an everyday issue brought up in class or in a conversation that we were to be a people of integrity and trustworthiness. It may have been just where I was raised or the people that I was around, but it was a big deal. I rarely hear of it being a big deal today. People worked hard to go out and make a living. They had a sheer determination and grit and a grin. They carved out a life for themselves and most always for those who would come behind them.

Sadly, we live in a day when too many folks want what they want when they want it and with no work or investment on their part. Greatness is far more likely to come not from what you get but from what you give. And it is far more likely to be found hanging around a wonderful verse of Scripture that says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. 9:10). Give your best to the job and to those who are around you. Do your job even if they don't. Do your best to be helpful even if others do not help you. It is the right thing to do and the right thing to do will ultimately bring right to you.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Staff Changes



WHITE OAK CHURCH, SMITH COUNTY ASSOCIATION, has called Tyler Chavis as pastor. He is shown with his wife Brittany and son Jase. Chavis served previously as associate pastor and youth minister at New Hebron Church.



ARLINGTON CHURCH, LINCOLN COUNTY ASSOCIATION, has called Matthew Green as pastor. He is shown with his wife Angie and children Nate and Chloe.



GRACE UNITED CHURCH, DECATUR, has called Gary Felton of Newton as pastor. Newton attended Mid-America Seminary, Memphis, and has served churches in California, Tennessee, Indiana, and Newton. He is shown with his wife, Pat. They have two daughters (one son deceased), 12 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.



FIRST CHURCH, INVERNESS, has called Bryan Burge as pastor. He is shown with his wife Chelsea.

Vacation Bible School



FERNWOOD CHURCH, FERNWOOD: June 4 - 7; 40+ participating each night.



LAKE WASHINGTON FIRST CHURCH, GLEN ALLAN: June 2 - 6, with an enrollment of 78.

In other Vacation Bible School News:

- **Liberty Church, Carroll County:** June 21, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; commencement, June 22, 5 p.m.; Angela Cleveland, director; Gary Tanner, pastor.
- **Friendship Church, Brookhaven:** June 23 - 27, 8:30 a.m. - noon; June 22, kick-off with Sunday School at 10 a.m., followed by lunch, sno-cones, and water slides. Preregister at (601) 833-5603.
- **Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg:** June 22, 5 - 7:30 p.m.; June 23 - 26, 6 - 8:30 p.m.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

June 19, 2014

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

NOW IS THE TIME

JULY 25, 2014

MISSISSIPPI COLISEUM, JACKSON
6:30-8:30 p.m.

**SPEAKER -
BRYANT
BUSH**

**WORSHIP
THE
GATHERING**
(CHRIS ALBRITTON BAND)

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MISSION OFFERING TAKEN
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE
EVANGELISM DEPT. AT THE MBCB AT
1.800.748.1651, EXT. 278.

**I WILL
GIVE YOU
A NEW
HEART**

EZEKIEL 11:19

**PRAY FOR GOD TO
RENEW OUR HEARTS FOR
HIS MISSION.**

**PLAN YOUR CHURCH'S
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BETWEEN AUGUST &
OCTOBER.**

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AUGUST 22-23, 2014
NO COST • NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED



TERRY AZMAN
National WMU President



DEBORAH BRYANT
First Lady of Mississippi



JOYFUL PRAISE QUARTET
Brandon Church, Brandon

SCHEDULE

5:30 p.m. Registration
6:30 p.m. Worship Celebration
8:00 p.m. Session 1: Conferences
9:00 p.m. 100+ Girls Auxiliary Celebration
7:30 a.m. Executive Board Breakfast
8:30 a.m. Morning Collaboration with Annual Meeting
10:40 a.m. Session 3: Conferences
11:40 a.m. Session 4: Conferences
12:30 p.m. Dinners

For more information, contact
Terry Azman at 601-292-3319
or email at terry.azman@wmu.org
or call 1-800-748-1651, ext. 284

MMPF Mississippi Missionary Parents Fellowship

SEPTEMBER 19-20, 2014

Parents of Mississippi Missionaries

You are warmly invited to be a part of the MPF weekend
at **Garaywa Camp and Conference Center** beginning at
2:00 p.m. on Friday and concluding with lunch on Saturday.

We want you! If you haven't been in a while or have been
invited, but never come - this is the time! We will hear
wonderful stories from your children on the field, and we will
bring them before the Lord in prayer.

Come, be a part of something BIG! We look forward to
seeing you there!

MMF Mississippi Missionary Fellowship

SEPTEMBER 20, 2014

8:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

Current missionaries on Stateside, Retired missionaries, Former
missionaries you are invited to a reunion of Mississippi
missionary fellowship!

Light breakfast and a lunch is provided.

Come enjoy the precious time with one another and hear
reports from the field, drenched in prayer. If you know of
someone who has not connected yet, please invite them.

For more information contact the Mississippi WMU
office at 601-292-3319.

2014 NORTH REGIONAL RALLY

**TUESDAY
AUGUST 26
CENTRAL HILLS,
KOSCIUSKO**

662-289-9730 or dramage@mbcb.org

8:15 - 11:30 a.m.

\$1 at the door

2014 SOUTH REGIONAL RALLY

**TUESDAY
AUGUST 26
COVINGTON/JEFF DAVIS ASSOC.
FAMILY LIFE CENTER,
COLLINS**

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8:15 - 11:30 a.m.

\$1 at the door

SPONSORED BY THE DISCIPLESHIP/FAMILY MINISTRY DEPT. AT
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CHALLENGE TO BUILD

THE CHALLENGE OF FUND-RAISING IS ALWAYS SPIRITUAL.

Usually we assume it is financial. But Jesus reminds us in His encounter with the rich young ruler that money and spirituality are inseparably intertwined. As long as we are preoccupied with saving our souls or our money, then we cannot occupy ourselves with the God who alone can provide us eternal life.

For over thirty years, the design of the **CHALLENGE TO BUILD** program to raise money has been proven time and again, but it actually begins at the point of spiritual renewal. If your congregation is in need of fund-raising services, the place to begin is on your knees in prayer. Through **CHALLENGE TO BUILD**, your church will discover the adequacy of Christ. Our prayer is that you will accrue enlarged funding for ministries and facilities, that your fellowship will be strengthened, and that your congregation's vision for missions and evangelism will be renewed.

CHALLENGE TO BUILD Consultants are trained ministers who will walk your church through the steps for an effective campaign. He will help enlist and train local church leaders for each phase of fund-raising as the calendar unfolds. The Consultant will assist the church's leadership in the analysis of its potential giving, help set realistic goals, and produce maximum results. Our Consultants are paid an established fee so you can be assured that no pressure will be brought to bear on your congregation to raise money to award the Consultant, and **CHALLENGE TO BUILD** costs less than other commercial services.

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■ CTB SCHEDULE

A 3-4 month schedule will include:

- A financial analysis
- Enlisting and training of workers
- Preparing materials
- Prayer visits
- Victory Sunday

A 5 week Communications program:

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- Testimonies
- Sermon
- CHURCH-WIDE BANQUET AND CHILDREN'S PARTY

For more information contact the Stewardship/CP Promotion at
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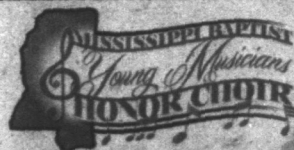
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JULY 25-26, 2014

NEW LOCATION!
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The Mississippi Baptist Young Musicians Honor Choir Weekend
April 11-12, 2015 - Guest Choral Conductor: Susan Messer

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AUGUST 9, 2014
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July 12, 2014

North Greenwood Baptist
Church, Greenwood
8:30 a.m. - noon
Dr. Wayne Marshall
Keynote Speaker &
Pastor/General Officer Leader

August 9, 2014

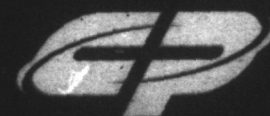
Petal-Harvey Baptist Church,
Petal
8:30 a.m. - noon
Dr. Larry LeBlanc
Keynote Speaker &
Pastor/General Officer Leader

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These online conferences are designed to train missions and women's
ministry leaders in the local association and church to facilitate missions
education and women's ministry as needed in their ministry environment.
To participate you must register online. To register, go to the Mississippi
Baptist Convention website (www.mbc.org), under the departments tab
click on missions strategy, then click on WMU and select the Online
Training tab under Missions Education.

The cost per conference is \$10.00 (except for the Adult Missions and
Women's Ministry Course which is \$15.00). The course fee covers all books
& resources you will need to complete the course.

For more information about online training please contact Tammy
Anderson in the Mississippi WMU office at the MBCB at
800-748-1651, ext. 323 or tanderson@mbcb.org

Pray this day for...

June 20 - July 10, 2014

"Play the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 15:5-6

Pray for **Charlie Worth**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples.

Pray for **James & Mary Adair**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for **John & Claudia Brown**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for **Donna & Donald Brown**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach & church planting.

Pray for **Guy & Cindy Dekkers**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through hospitality coordination & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for **Thomas & Kerri Dewett**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for **Clarence Frank Harrison & Phoebe**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples.

Pray for **Mark & Karen Alexander**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples.

Pray for **Arnold & Susie Austin**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through community & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for **Richard & Martha Beal**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through financial administration & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for **David & Laurie Bledsoe**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for **Kaye Brooks**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through church planting.

Pray for **Karen Brown**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through nursing.

Pray for **Matthew Burks**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through evangelism.

Pray for **David & Pamela Carlton**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through theological education, church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for **Rebekah Clark**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through youth evangelism.

Pray for **Richard & Wanda Clark**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination.


Pray for **Alvin & Mary Doyle**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through member care.

Pray for **Aaron & Tiffany Epps**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.


Pray for **Robert & Margaret Fortenberry**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for **David & Gloria Glaze**, missionaries ministering to Deaf Peoples through media consultation & media promotion.

The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 24 year terms of full career service.



STATE LITERACY MISSIONS CONFERENCE



1:00 p.m. Thursday, August 7, 2014 – 1:00 p.m. Saturday, August 9, 2014
Morrison Heights Baptist Church, 3000 Hampstead Blvd, Clinton, MS


Early Bird Registration
Fee: \$45
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Fee: \$55
Deadline: July 31

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 or the MS WMU at 1-800-748-1651, ext. 319.



SCHOOL PRAYER WALK



School Prayer Walks & Teacher Appreciation Days Anytime in AUGUST!

Pray for our students, teachers, & administrators. Pray that the Glory of the Lord will fill the offices, classrooms, halls and athletic fields of our Mississippi schools, especially our colleges and universities! Suggested resources to help you plan may be found here: www.mbc.org/wmu

> Prayer (prayer walk guides, plus links to NAMB and IMB prayer sites)

<http://www.wmstore.com/product.asp?sku=E114110>
 (download guide for prayer walks)

www.pinterest.com/volunteerspot (teacher appreciation ideas)

Contact Tammy Anderson of the MS WMU for advice: 601-292-3323 or tanderson@mbcb.org

HOUSE TOPS

Bible Drill



WEST HEIGHTS CHURCH, PONTOTOC, recognized its Bible drillers in grades 3 - 12 in the June 1 morning worship service. David Hamilton, pastor.

MS POSITIONS

MORGAN CHAPEL BAPTIST CHURCH OF STURGIS, 15 MILES FROM STARKVILLE/MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY, IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH. Please send resumes to Wayne Carpenter, 269 Tom St., Sturgis, MS 39769 or to morganann76@yahoo.com.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BROOKLYN, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A YEAR ROUND BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR. Please email cover letter, resume and reference list to allen@jafflowerslaw.net.

STUDENT MINISTER - HEUCKS RETREAT BAPTIST CHURCH of Brookhaven, MS is seeking part-time Student Minister. Send resumes to Heucks Retreat Baptist Church 2167 Heucks Retreat Rd., Brookhaven, MS 39601 or email to kparvin@hrbaptist.net

FAIRFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH IN MOSELLE, MS IS LOOKING FOR A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Send resume to 942 Moselle Seminary Rd., Moselle, MS 39459 or email to fairfield@payspringstet.net

INDIAN SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH IN LAUREL, MISSISSIPPI, IS IN IMMEDIATE NEED OF A PART-TIME MUSIC DIRECTOR. If interested, send resume to Indian Springs Baptist Church, 500 Indian Springs Church Road, Laurel, MS 39443

TRINITY BAPTIST IS PRAYERFULLY LOOKING FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR, BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC AND BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER. We are also looking for an Interim Pastor for the moment. Please send resume to Trinity Baptist Church, P.O. Box 328, Petal, MS. Or email it to trinitypetal@gmail.com

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER NEEDED AT NEW SIGHT BAPTIST. Please send resumes to: Youth Minister Search Committee, 629 Forest Trail, Brookhaven, MS 39601.

SOUTH MCCOMB BAPTIST CHURCH OF MCCOMB, MS IS SEEKING AN INTERIM MUSIC MINISTER to lead our church in a blended style of worship. If you are interested please send e-mail resume to smbc01@bellsouth.net

First Person: Begin to take responsibility for your health

SECOND IN A SERIES

When I was asked to participate in the Baptist Health Systems HealthWorks video series to talk about general health, I knew it would be a great opportunity to speak about health outside of my office setting.

As a general practitioner, one of the most important things I can say to you is this: act responsibly about your own health. If you choose to be responsible for your health, you may just be surprised to learn that it not only affects you personally but also your immediate family as well as others around you.

I went to medical school to learn how to diagnose and treat disease, and I do that on a daily basis. Over the years I've learned that the successful treatment of disease is a two-way process. I can prescribe a treatment or pill to fix the immediate problem and tell you the things you need to do to get better or to eliminate the problem all together, but you as a patient have the responsibility to follow through on the prescribed advice.

Session One of the HealthWorks series is titled, "The Big

Picture." There is a lot of good information in this section, but I want to focus on three areas where we all need to be responsible. As a parent, being responsible in these areas will positively affect your child's future health.

■ **Never use tobacco products** in any form. Don't smoke, don't chew, and don't dip! Did I make myself clear? If you use any of these forms of tobacco, stop right now. Research has shown that the use of tobacco products is detrimental to your health in many ways. The most obvious is tobacco's cancer-causing effects, but there is also the loss of bone in women which leads to osteoporosis. Appearance-wise, it is the major cause of wrinkling of the face and thinning of the skin, particularly around the mouth.

The good news: when you stop using tobacco, the body immediately begins to repair itself.

■ **Get moving!** Many of us, our children included, have fallen into a sedentary life style and this lack of exercise is having disastrous effects on our health. Obesity, high blood pressure, and Type II Diabetes are just a few of the health concerns my patients deal with every day, and now we are seeing these health issues in an increasingly younger population.

Getting enough exercise is one factor which enhances the treatment of a number of diseases. Be responsible and

make the effort to move more each day. You don't have to run a marathon, but you do need to make a conscious effort to be more active.

■ **Wear sunscreen!** Look for a sunscreen that offers protection from the two types of ultraviolet radiation, UVA and UVB. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation can damage the skin, age it prematurely, and increase your risk of skin cancer. Everyone needs sunscreen no matter the natural color of your skin.

If you are outside for extended periods of time, wear a sun-protective hat and sun glasses to protect your eyes. Be sure that your children are protected. Research has shown having severe sunburn as a child increases your risk of skin cancer as an adult.

If you as an adult model the behaviors of no tobacco use, exercising more, and wearing sunscreen every day, your children will more easily acquire these good behaviors also.

I hope you enjoy the HealthWorks DVD series. I believe when you understand having good health really works for you and your entire family and you begin to take responsibility for your health, you will see good results begin to happen.

This series is informative, entertaining, and wrapped in a Bible study format that just may inspire you to get started. Learn more about this series and place an order at HealthWorksDVD.com.

Johnston is a physician at Main Street Family Medicine Clinic in Madison, which is associated with Baptist Health Systems, Inc., in Jackson.



JOHNSTON

CLASSIFIEDS

ELLENDALE BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE MEMPHIS AREA IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR TO PRESCHOOLERS, CHILDREN, AND YOUTH. Resumes should be sent to EBC, Attn: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 487, Elletdale, TN 38029

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MINISTER OF CHILDREN - Springfield Baptist Church is 30-miles north of Nashville, TN. We average 400 in worship and have an active children's ministry. Candidates should have a minimum of 2-years experience and a seminary degree is preferred. Please send resumes to befbowler05@gmail.com. The deadline for resumes is June 30.

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ITF RSJF NAYVR ITSI Q KA, UFSY

NQIGFRR AX JF, ITSI ITF XSITFY TSIT

RFGI JF.

ZATG XQBF: ITQYIW-RQL

Clue: U = B

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: James 1:25

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employers to provide abortion-causing drugs to their workers.

The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule later this month on a lawsuit filed by the Greens against the mandate.

ERLC President Russell D. Moore said the Greens "believe that every human life from the moment of conception is sacred, and they believe that the government is not the Lord of their consciences."

Messengers gave the Greens a standing ovation.

Abedini received the Richard Land Award for Distinguished Service for "faithfully serving the Lord Jesus Christ... despite the risk involved."

Abedini converted to Christianity from Islam and led house churches in his native Iran before moving to the U.S. in 2005. During a trip to Iran in 2012, he was arrested and sent to prison, subjected to beatings and torture, and placed in solitary confinement.

Abedini's wife Naghmeh, who lives in the U.S. with the couple's two children, accepted the award on her husband's behalf to a standing ovation.

Muslim at SWBTS

On two occasions, messengers addressed the recent decision of Southwestern Seminary President Paige Patterson to admit a Muslim student, contrary to the seminary's admission policy of admitting only Christians. During Patterson's report to the convention, a messenger requested a "straight-forward explanation" of the decision.

In response, Patterson apologized to the convention, saying, "I made an exception to a



FOR JAILED PASTOR — Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) president Russell D. Moore (left) presents the Richard Land Award for Distinguished Service to Naghmeh Abedini (right), who accepts on behalf of her husband, American pastor Saeed Abedini who is imprisoned in Iran for his Christian faith. Looking on is Steve Green, president and CEO of Hobby Lobby, whose family received the ERLC's John Leland Religious Liberty Award for opposing the Obamacare abortion/contraceptive mandate with a landmark lawsuit currently before the U.S. Supreme Court. (BP photo)

rule that I assumed, probably wrongly, the president has a right to make." The student is not funded by CP money and is "very open to the Gospel," Patterson said.

The decision to violate admission policy was motivated in part by a desire to win the student to Jesus, Patterson said. He said he will tell God on judgment day: "I violated a policy but I didn't want to stand before You with blood on my hands. Dear God, I did the best that I knew how."

Louisiana pastor Steve James, chairman of Southwestern Seminary's board of trustees, told messengers that trustees will discuss concerns about the Muslim student's admission at meetings in Sep-

tember and October. James requested prayer for Patterson and the seminary.

Earlier a messenger moved that Southwestern Seminary be required to explain its decision regarding the Muslim student. The motion was ruled out of order because it directed an entity rather than requesting an action.

Miscellaneous

In other matters:

■ Messengers elected Clint Pressley, pastor of Hickory Grove Church in Charlotte, N.C., as first vice president, and Hance Dilbeck, pastor of Quail Springs Church in Oklahoma City, as second vice president. The convention re-

lected John Yeats as recording secretary and Jim Wells as registration secretary.

■ The Crossover evangelistic push in Baltimore preceding the annual meeting yielded 214 salvation decisions. More than 2,300 volunteers participated in Crossover in partnership with 32 local churches.

■ The CP exhibit featured a series of panel discussions projected on high-definition screens in the exhibit hall and streamed on the Internet. Nearly 125 panelists addressed such topics as Southern Baptist cooperation, international missions, church planting theological education, ethnic diversity, social justice, and sexuality.

■ The International Mission Board (IMB) presentation focused on God's work in Cuba and featured testimonies from Cuban believers.

IMB President Tom Elliff reported that more than 6,000 churches were planted overseas last year in conjunction with national partners. Last year the average IMB missionary helped lead 49 people to faith in Christ, led 24 new converts to be baptized, helped mentor at least five potential leaders, and was involved in discipleship with 90 people.

■ The North American Mis-

sion Board (NAMB) presentation highlighted a Baltimore church revitalization effort and a church plant in Montreal that grew to 700 worshippers in its first year. "We are absolutely committed to planting evangelistic churches all across America," NAMB President Kevin Ezell said.

NAMB also presented a new evangelistic conversation guide developed by Jimmy Scroggins, pastor of First Church in West Palm Beach, Fla.

■ Golden Gate Seminary President Jeff Iorg told messengers that the seminary plans to announce the site of its new Southern California main campus later this summer. The seminary had previously announced its intention to relocate from the present Mill Valley campus in the San Francisco area to southern California.

■ Messengers proposed 17 motions, six of which were referred to SBC entities for consideration. A motion asking churches to "pray passionately and regularly for persecuted Christians" was adopted by unanimous consent. Ten motions were ruled out of order.

The motions referred for consideration will be published in the June 26 issue of The Baptist Record.

Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)
If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Crisis of Faith: When Tragedy Hits Home • Ezekiel 24:15-27

Grief is an emotional response to a significant loss, and all will suffer some loss during their lives. What will you do when adversity visits you? How should the follower of Christ behave when tragedy strikes?

Ezekiel had answered God's call to serve him. Then one day the Lord told him that his wife, the delight of his eyes, would die that same day, (Ezekiel 24:15-27 ESV). Hebrews 9:27 reads, "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment," (ESV). Do not over interpret this event in Ezekiel's life. God simply told His prophet that his wife would die and how he was to respond publicly to the death of his wife. The significance in this Scripture is that God chose to use this event in the prophets life to deliver a message to Israel. Matthew 10:29 reads, "Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's consent," (HCSB).

The Lord knows in advance when everyone will die, and that included Ezekiel's wife. The emphasis of the command of God was that Ezekiel was to be mute and not to grieve outwardly. Ezekiel could only sigh, but not out loud, according to the Lord's directive, which God used to teach Judah an object lesson.

This unusual behavior was designed to forecast that when Jerusalem soon would fall, the people of Judah would be so shocked that they too would be mute. They would neither mourn nor weep, but would simply be dumbfounded by the destruction of their beloved Temple. The defeat of Jerusalem would be so sudden and the people would be taken captive so quickly that they would not have time for traditional mourning.

Their sorrow would yield no public grief, however, and was not true repentance. 2 Corinthians 7:10 reads, "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death," (ESV).

As Ezekiel mourned the death of his wife, we are reminded that all of us mourn losses during our lives. God uses loss in our lives to draw us closer. Judah, however, did not mourn in a way that resulted in repentance. The

Scripture clearly teaches that regret and repentance are not the same.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 teaches, "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope," (ESV). The apostle Paul did not write here that we should not grieve, but that those of us who know the Lord Jesus should not grieve hopelessly, as do the lost. Jesus will-

ingly lost everything so that we can endure our losses. 2 Corinthians 5:21 reminds us, "For our sake he made

body," (ESV). The Jews to whom Jesus spoke did not understand that He referred to His body and not the physical temple. The Jews in the day of Ezekiel were more interested in the temple itself than in serving the God who designed it and chose to dwell there. The temple that the Jews in Jesus's day thought to which He referred was destroyed within about 40 years. In fact it was the third Temple. The first, Solomon's temple was destroyed in 587 B.C. by the Babylonians, then the second was remodeled and upgraded by Herod the great just a few years before Jesus's time. Herod's temple would be destroyed by the Romans around 70 A.D.

So how should believers react when a tragedy happens? The prophet Ezekiel continued to obey God even if it was contrary to his nature to outwardly mourn. So first we must continue to be obedient to the Lord even in the midst of a disaster. A crisis does not exempt us from obedience. Second, we must continue to repent of the sins between us and our righteous God. Before and after tragedy hits home, be sure that you obey the Lord and that your heart stays true to Him.

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.



Explore the Bible

with Rick Henson

him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God," (ESV).

John 2:19-22 reads, "Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking about the temple of his

God is Forgiving • 1 John 1:5 - 2:2

"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:8-12 NKJV).

This week we will go back to the book of 1 John to focus on the fourth attribute in our study—God is Forgiving. "The apostle John wrote the Letter of 1 John to believers facing the attack of their faith by false teachers. He wrote to counteract the doctrinal, moral, and social fabrications proclaimed by those misguided teachers and to assure believers of the trustworthiness of the gospel they had first received. He included in his reassurance the reality that every person sins, but Christ's work provides the means of restored fellowship with God" (Lifeway).

There are two kinds of forgiveness. First there is judicial forgiveness which occurs at the moment of salvation (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 5:6-11). A person is freed from the penalty of sin through the sacrifice of Christ. This is justification. Then from that moment on, we

battle the power and presence of sin in our lives (Eph. 6:10-18; Phil. 3:12).

We are called to have fellowship with Him, practice the truth, and walk in the Light. Thus begins the process of sanctification in the life of a believer. Because God is holy, loving, just, and forgiving, He is at work in our lives molding, shaping and conforming us to the image of Christ. Yet here is the cold hard truth: we still sin. And when our sin is not confessed it breaks

the fellowship between us and God. It is here we see the second kind of forgiveness which is parental or relational. The Holman New Testament Commentary states, "This sin does not cause us to lose our salvation (Rom. 8:37-39), but it does break the fellowship between us and God, just as the sin of a child or a spouse breaks the fellowship with parents or a mate . . . We need judicial forgiveness only once. We need parental forgiveness whenever we sin."

"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," (vss. 8-9). "To confess, continually, means agreeing with God that I have done something wrong; it is disobedience, deliberately going against what the Word of God teaches. God is faithful to His promises. Look at the new covenant which is de-

scribed in Jeremiah 31:34—He will forgive sin and remember it no more. Psalm 51 paints a vivid picture of the

phrase, "to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". David's repentant heart cry was *Wash me thoroughly, cleanse me, purify me, wash me and I will be whiter than snow . . . The purpose of confession and cleansing is to restore to me the joy of Your salvation.* "Forgiveness unleashes joy. It brings peace. It washes the slate clean. It sets all the highest values of love

in motion. In a sense, forgiveness is Christianity at its highest level" (John MacArthur).

My little children, The Beloved Disciple tenderly writes, *I do not want you to sin.* Furthermore, I want you to know when you sin you are not powerless, you have an Advocate with the Father. *He is Jesus Christ the righteous.* The word Advocate, means Helper or High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16), one who pleads a case. And *He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; propitiation means appeasement or satisfaction.* Christ met the sacrifice God required for the punishment of sin. God is forgiving because of the work of Christ. He always forgives when we truly repent.

"Here I am Lord and I'm drowning in Your sea of forgetfulness, the chains of yesterday surround me, I yearn for peace and rest . . . Jesus, can You show me just how far the east is from the west? 'Cause I can't bear to see the man I've been rising up in me again. In the arms of mercy I find rest, You know just how far, the east is from the west, from one scarred hand to the other. . . East to West by Casting Crowns."

Leathers is a member of First Church, Madison.

Bible Studies for Life

with Laura Leathers



Revivals & Homecomings

► **Unity Church, Moselle:** day School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by

dinner on the grounds; James Taylor, speaker; Garry Edwards, pastor.

► **Pilgrim's Rest Church, Ethel:** Homecoming and re-

vival, June 22 - 25; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Art Land, speaker.

► **Gatesville Church, Crys-**

tal Springs: Homecoming, June 22; services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Matt Armstrong, speaker; Misty Prine, music.

Just for the Record



SALEM CHURCH, KEWANEE, celebrated its 176th anniversary in May. The church is the oldest in Lauderdale County.



FIRST CHURCH, CHICORA, broke ground on its new sanctuary Jan. 19. Shown is construction committee Arthur Lee Sturdivant, Arthur Bishop, Leslie Odorn, Ronnie Crane, and Rusty Crane. Jackie Spell, pastor.

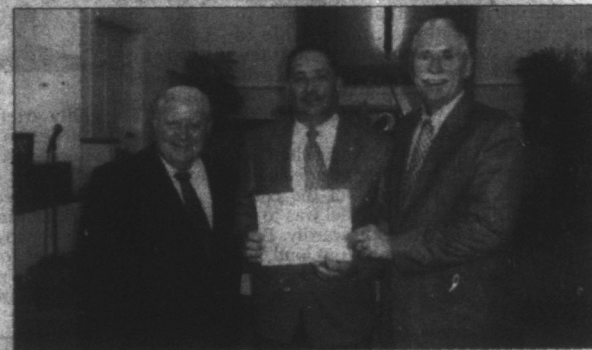


CENTER HILL CHURCH, HAMILTON, held a parent-child dedication Mother's Day. Shown are Chad, Jennifer, and Ellie Pounders; Joey, Demika, Gavin, and Thomas Ross; and Jeremy, Melisah, Noah, and Brooke Hester.

In other Church News:

> **Harmony Church, Walnut**, will hold a 50th ministry anniversary celebration for pastor Ron Mitchell June 22. Service, 10 a.m., followed by luncheon and reception.

> **First Church, Terry**, recently exceeded its \$5500 goal for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering by collecting \$6061.20.



Louie N. Formby, III, was ordained to the ministry by **FIRST CHURCH, NICHOLSON**, May 18. Shown are Jerry Barlow, Formby, and Carl Myers.



The youth from **CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO**, went to Blue Mountain College for their summer youth trip. Greg and Shirley Allen and Jason and Jenny Leggett, leaders; Hal Hatten, pastor.



MT. PISGAH CHURCH, SANDHILL, recognized high school graduate Alex Evans and kindergarten graduate Parker Hood May 25.



ETHEL CHURCH, ETHEL, recognizes its high school graduates. Shown are Austin Burchfield, Chloe Clark, Jonathan Sprayberry, and pastor Joey Barnard.



Youth from **FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA**, served June 1 - 7 at Mission Arlington, Arlington, Tex.



The GA's and RA's under the leadership of Women of Grace, **FLOWOOD CHURCH, FLOWOOD**, raised \$1300 for Pure Water, Pure Love. The contribution will be used to provide water filters where there is no access to clean water for our missionaries.